

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

In accordance with the provisions of the Massachusetts General laws, Chapter 30A, Section 20, notice is hereby given for the following meeting of the:

***Arlington School Committee
School Committee Meeting
Thursday, March 3, 2016
7:00 PM***

Arlington Human Rights Commission and Arlington School Committee Joint Meeting

*Arlington High School
School Committee Room
869 Massachusetts Avenue, 6th Floor
Arlington, MA*

Public Participation

Review minutes from 11 23 2015 Meeting

Discussion of Summary of Work

Adjournment

The listings of matters are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair, which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.

Stated times and time amounts, listed in parenthesis, are the estimated amount of time for that particular agenda item. Actual times may be shorter or longer depending on the time needed to fully explore the topic.

Submitted by Sharon Grossman



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts

Review minutes from 11 23 2015 Meeting

ATTACHMENTS:

Type	File Name	Description
Minutes	JointCommitteeonSuspensions_11_23_2015_draft_min.docx	11 23 2015 draft minutes

**Joint ASC/AHRC
Subcommittee on Suspensions**
Monday, November 23rd

Present: SC: Bill Hayner, Judson Peirce, Jennifer Susse
Human Rights Commission: Sharon Grossman (chair), Gary Horowitz, Ghandi DiFiglia
APS: Dr. Kathleen Bodie, Paula Nevile from Business Office and Special Projects

Meeting called to order at 4:00 PM

Motion to approve minutes by Mr. Hayner, seconded by Ms. Susse. All voted in favor, with Ms. DiFiglia abstaining.

At earlier meetings we agreed to focus on suspensions in which a student was charged with defiance, especially disrespect to faculty and staff. That is the area in which there is the greatest chance for subjective interpretation, and which nationally there has been the most bias.

Ms. Nevile presented information about the suspensions from the 2013/14 academic year. In that year there were 70 suspensions at the High School, 33 out-of-school suspensions (OSS) and 37 in-school-suspensions (ISS). At the High School over half of the students who had out-of-school suspensions were group-home students (though only 11 out of 33 incidents). At the Middle School there were 44 suspensions, 21 OSS and 23 ISS, and at the Elementary Schools there were 4 suspensions, 3 OSS and 1 ISS. Hispanics accounted for 11% of the suspensions, despite being only 5% of the school population (4% at H.S. level), Blacks accounted for 11% of the suspensions, despite being only 4% of the school population (3% at the H.S. level), Whites accounted for 66% of the suspensions and 76% of the population (80% at the H.S. level), and Asians for 6% of the suspensions and 11% of the population (10% at the H.S. level).

Dr. Bodie affirmed that students are only suspended when the reasons rise “to a high level”; for example, drugs, graffiti or bullying, and that the administrators are thoughtful and respectful in their approach. At the High School either a principal or a dean can suspend. Dr. Bodie pointed out that students who are out on felonies are suspended until the situation is adjudicated.

We observed that even were we to take out the incidents involving students from Group Homes there is still a higher rate of Black and Hispanic suspensions, and a lower rate for Whites and Asians.

Mr. Hayner questioned the elementary school numbers. He reiterated that suspensions that involve students with disabilities, or who are on IEP’s, need to go through a hearing.

Ms. Susse observed that the numbers of suspensions are too small to draw any clear-cut conclusions about, but that given that this is a national issue she would be surprised if we didn’t have similar issues as other communities.

Ms. Grossman noted that we have seen disproportionality, but that the number of group home students has skewed the percentages. Were we to take out the number of group homes students our numbers

would look better, and would not be out of proportion with the communities to which we compare ourselves to. Mr. Horowitz noted that he was not happy with the numbers we have seen, but that they make sense. Ms. DiFiglia emphasized that we need to have a compassionate approach to troubled kids, perhaps by using restorative justice approaches rather than suspensions. Dr. Bodie argued that suspensions are often for the greater good of the school. When a student transgresses we need a visible punishment to help with the social norming of the school.

Ms. Grossman concluded by observing that the issues raised in these discussions are important, and that she would go back to Human Rights Commission to decide the next steps.

5:00 Ms. Hayner moved to adjourn. Mr. Horowitz seconded. All in favor.

Att: 2013-14 CRDC ISS/OSS Suspension Data tables